

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

Domain names are transferred in a two-stage process. The first stage of the process is a public auction conducted on a web server, with the bidders accessing the auction website over the Internet. When the auction does not result in a transfer of the registration, for example when the auction has a reserve that is not met, the transaction proceeds into a second, private stage. The auction server invites the high bidder from the auction to participate in a first bilateral negotiation, preferably by sending e-mail including the URL for a negotiation website. Should this first private negotiation not result in a transfer, then another bidder from the auction is invited to participate in a second bilateral negotiation. This process continues until a transfer completes successfully or the offering party withdraws the domain name from the market.